



Ask SCORE for Business Advice

"Ask SCORE" Column
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Modifying a Business to Succeed, Dec. 24, 2009 by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

As the New Year approaches, Patrick Long is busy giving his business a new start. He has changed his business plan and location as he applies information learned in one of the latest E-Hub Entrepreneur classes.

Long, the owner of Green Bay Powerhouse Sports (www.gbpowerhousesports.com), didn't bank on his previous experience when his business suffered a setback. Instead, he signed up for classes and decided to learn what was necessary in order to be successful.

"I was a coach first," Long explained, "and had to learn how to be a businessman. E-Hub says you need a business plan and a goal so that you aren't floating off in space. Have a plan and stick to the plan."

He got into business accidentally, and had never taken time to learn the basics. He purchased the Wheels and Motions building on Glendale Avenue in Howard and got the business along with it. Since it was making money, he kept it running. Business was booming on weekends with teens meeting to skate and socialize. Then the YMCA opened just down the road and things changed. Much of his core business gravitated to the YMCA's popular Teen Nights.

"Things were changing and I knew I'd have to target a new audience," Long said. "Since I love baseball and softball, I decided to convert to a sports complex where I could offer something different."

He installed batting cages, pitching lanes, volleyball and basketball courts, and a party room. He changed the focus to instruction and offered coaching. Some areas were profitable and others were not. When Long sold the building in late November, he decided to fine tune the business and relocate next to Cook's Corner on Waube Lane where he will open around the first of January.

He downsized from 12,000 to 8,000 sq. ft. stating, "I learned a lot about what makes money and what doesn't and this will be the place to go for pitching and hitting." Instead of trying to be something for everyone, he will focus on baseball, softball, and parties and already has more than 2,000 people registered. The volleyball and basketball courts are

gone and he has found his niche. He apologizes if he sounds corny, but says that he truly has a passion for baseball and softball and helping kids.

Long's greatest love is coaching and he has coached numerous area teams including the Bay Port High School jayvees. He is convinced that all kids can learn how to be better, and succeed at their level.

“I can explain things to kids so they understand how to play the game the right way whether it be the size of their bat or their stance at the plate. To have kids come in dragging their head and bat and saying that they struck out three times, and I take them into the batting cage and do a few drills. The next time the kid comes in, I get a high five and he says he got two hits. That's priceless,” Long said.

If you'd like to learn more, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit www.greenbayscore.org or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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